

Nursing Politics.

WE are glad to observe that very few medical men attended the Special General Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association on the 17th ult., to support those members of their profession, whose conduct of the business of the Association is universally condemned by all honourable persons. Mr. F. Gant and Dr. Bedford Fenwick were the only two Vice-Presidents seated in the body of the Hall.

THE medical men who have actively supported the official policy of depriving the matrons and nurses of liberty of speech and independence in their own Association, were gathered together to support the passing of the new code of Bye-Laws. We noticed, of course, Sir Dyce Duckworth; Sir James Crichton Browne, Mr. Pickering Pick, Mr. John Langton, and Mr. Fardon, the Hon. Officers; Mr. Brudenell Carter; Drs. Wethered, Coupland, William Duncan, and Mr. Pearce Gould, of the Middlesex Hospital; Drs. Outterson Wood, C. Percival White, Willingham Gell, Howard Barrett, W. Fairbank (Windsor), and Davey (Ryde), Mr. Alfred Cooper, and Mr. Mark Hovell. Mr. Comyns Berkeley, of the "Middlesex," acted the part of "Mercury" in admirable style. Beyond these, it was remarked how few doctors were present, and how very conspicuously absent were the many eminent medical men who formerly made a point of supporting the Royal President at all public meetings. Nothing could have been more deeply significant.

THE suggested Bye-Laws are unhesitatingly condemned by every unprejudiced medical man to whom we have shown them.

DR. BIERNACKI'S amendment was significant—"coming events cast their shadows before." He proposed that the members should themselves retain the right to determine the qualification for registration instead of relegating such responsibility to the Executive Committee—a suggestion which met with much applause from "the small and turbulent," and, we might add, the intelligent minority.

MR. FARDON informed the meeting, in opposing this wise suggestion, that there was no "essential difference" between self-government and government by the Hon. Officers and their *selected* Executive Committee!!

THE "essential difference" is whether nurses desire to be "*taken in and done for*" like congenital idiots, or whether they prefer to govern themselves like responsible human beings. The "Middlesex majority" elected to rank in the former category.

DR. BEZLY THORNE'S pitiable terror of the "*ex-officio* matrons" led him unwisely to court defeat by proposing that they should not even be given the semi *ex-officio* representation on the General Council, subject to annual dismissal by the vote of that body, proposed by the Hon. Officers as a "sop to Cerberus" for having deprived them of their *ex-officio* seats upon the Executive Committee, definitely given to them in the present Constitution.

IT is rumoured that as soon as faith has been broken with the Founders of the Association, as embodied in

the new Bye-Laws, all the matrons of the Metropolitan Training Schools—including, we presume, the matrons of St. Thomas's and the London Hospitals—are going to subject themselves to election by the employees of the Middlesex Hospital, and so scramble for the ten matrons' seats on the Executive Committee which they have absolutely refused to accept by *ex-officio* right from the foundation of the Association! This sounds extremely probable!!

IN playing the part of a modern Frankenstein, the Hon. Officers of the Royal British Nurses' Association must be careful as to the conduct of their pet little goblin, "Mob Rule"; he has an awkward and rapacious appetite, and finds honour, truth, discipline, decency, and especially magicians peculiarly palatable.

THE pauperization of the Royal British Nurses' Association goes on apace. A story is being widely told of a working woman, who bitterly remarked—"Nurses seems to me the cadgeringest body of women as is." This *à propos* of Miss Helen Foggo-Thompson's concert upon our behalf, without our consent, at St. James's Hall, of which the press remarked, "The programmes were sold by the prettiest nurses." We are not informed if other delectable delicacies were handed around by those syrens of the cap and apron!

ANYWAY Miss Danks got a wide advertisement at the expense of our self-respect, as the musical press was loud in its praises of her philanthropic efforts upon the behalf of "poor and needy nurses"!! How are the mighty fallen since those old inspiring days of ten years past, when the Founders of the British Nurses' Association inscribed upon the minutes the determination that "the Association should be self-supporting from the first."

Legal Matters.

AT the London County Sessions, before Mr. W. R. McConnell, Q.C., sitting at Clerkenwell, Mary Baines, a widow, formerly a nurse at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, pleaded not guilty to a charge of stealing articles from the Army and Navy Co-operative Society, value £1 12s. 6d. A lady detective, in the employ of the Stores, gave evidence as to the thefts. For the defence it was urged that Mrs. Baines had no felonious intent, that she was suffering intense pain in the head, and that she was in a condition of health sometimes accompanied by mania. Before the completion of the trial, the jury, believing that the defendant had no felonious intent when she took the articles, returned a verdict of "Not guilty." We desire to point out the frequency with which the nursing profession is dragged before the public and into the police courts by persons assuming the name of trained nurses, while possessing none of the necessary qualifications. A few weeks' experience in a lying-in hospital does not qualify a woman for the honourable title of "trained nurse," and the sooner trained nurses take steps to protect their professional reputation from the unenviable notoriety attached to the escapades of untrained persons, the better.

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